



THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C.
20250-0100

July 12, 2004

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Office of the Governor
Boise, Idaho 83720-0034

Dear Governor Kempthorne:

Today the Department of Agriculture reinstated interim protection for inventoried roadless areas on National Forest System lands. The Department also announced a proposed rule to replace the January 12, 2001 roadless rule with a petitioning process providing Governors the opportunity to seek individual rule-makings for managing and conserving inventoried roadless areas in their states.

This opportunity for States to offer petitions would be available for 18 months following the effective date of the final rule. Following the Department's review and acceptance of a state petition, the Forest Service would initiate subsequent State-specific rule making for the management and conservation of inventoried roadless areas in collaboration with the State involved in the petitioning process, and with the involvement of stakeholders and experts.

State governments are important partners with the Department in the management of National Forest System lands. The proposed rule offers a unique opportunity for us to work together in a constructive way to develop sound forest policy. It also invites collaboration with local communities and a broad range of interested parties as States craft their petitions.

We encourage your review and thoughts on this proposal. We look forward to working with you as we move forward together to develop roadless area conservation measures that are sensitive to state and local concerns and can withstand court review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann M. Veneman".

Ann M. Veneman

Inventoried Roadless Area Acreages by State

(Appendix A, November 2000 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Roadless Area Conservation Rule)

(1,000 acres)

Alabama	13
Alaska	14,779
Arizona	1,174
Arkansas	95
California	4,416
Colorado	4,433
Florida	50
Georgia	63
Idaho	9,322
Illinois	11
Indiana	8
Kentucky	3
Louisiana	7
Maine	6
Michigan	16
Minnesota	62
Mississippi	3
Missouri	25
Montana	6,397
Nevada	3,186
New Hampshire	235
New Mexico	1,597
North Carolina	172
North Dakota	266
Oklahoma	13
Oregon	1,965
Pennsylvania	25
Puerto Rico	24
South Carolina	8
South Dakota	80
Tennessee	85
Texas	4
Utah	4,013
Vermont	25
Virginia	394
Washington	2,015
West Virginia	202
Wisconsin	69
Wyoming	3,257
Total	58,518